



POCKET PC Expert

Keeping your data safe is easy and needn't be a chore, says **Steve Clack**. Make sure you're safe and find out about extra storage options and products that go beyond the capabilities of ActiveSync



WINDOWS MOBILE 2005 UNVEILED

By the time you read this, Microsoft will have unveiled Windows Mobile 2005, the latest incarnation of its Pocket PC operating system. Leaked screenshots and details indicate that it will include a Pocket Excel charting facility, table support and bulleted lists in Pocket Word and an enhanced Pocket Internet Explorer.

Handhelds with the new operating system are expected to ship in the next month and will include ActiveSync 4.0. ActiveSync 4.0 will almost certainly be available as a free download from www.microsoft.com/downloads, but whether Windows Mobile 2005 will be available as an upgrade for existing Pocket PCs is not yet clear. See Handhelds News on page 26 for more information.

■ PALM OS SOFTWARE FOR YOUR POCKET PC

If you've switched from Palm OS to Pocket PC and you miss a few of your old applications, help is at hand. Developers at StyleTap claim that their program of the same name can run most of the 20,000 Palm OS applications on a Pocket PC. "With this product, users who decide to migrate from a Palm OS device can keep running their favourite applications and existing Windows Mobile PDA users can access the vast array of popular, proven Palm OS applications," said Gregory Sokoloff, CEO and co-founder of StyleTap Inc. He added that the firm plans to extend this capability to other handheld operating systems such as Symbian OS. The software supports the latest VGA screens as well as older Pocket PC devices. StyleTap is available at an introductory price of \$30 (around £16) from www.styletap.com.

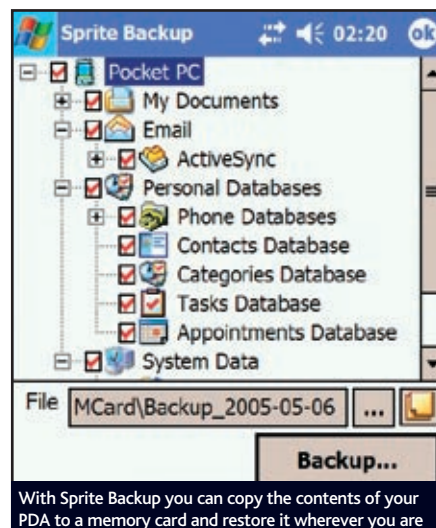
■ AMAZON BUYS E-BOOK FIRM

Amazon, the giant online bookseller, is moving into selling electronic books after buying Mobipocket, the creator of the Mobipocket Reader e-book client for Pocket PC, Palm and Symbian handhelds. The existing website (www.mobipocket.com) offers around 20,000 titles covering fiction and non-fiction.

When it comes to data loss or computer theft, most of us have a horror story to tell. Often it's not until we've been stung that we start performing diligent backups and make sure we keep our handheld (or laptop) safely by our side or locked away. If you've never experienced that sinking feeling as your Pocket PC suffers a hard reset and you realise you haven't done an ActiveSync in a fortnight, or watched as your backup-free handheld falls out of your shirt pocket on to a concrete floor, consider taking steps now rather than waiting until it's too late.

ACTIVESYNC AND BEYOND

Those of us with desk jobs tend to pop our handhelds in their desktop cradles when we're not using them. As well as keeping the battery charged permanently, this ensures that all your personal organiser data is backed up regularly. However, to back up all the other data in your Pocket PC you have to access ActiveSync's Backup menu manually. To be safe, you should do this regularly – preferably once a day. However, if you're away from your desk, whether on a day's business trip or a month's holiday, ActiveSync probably won't be available. So to protect anything you add or



change, you'll need to back up your handheld to an SD or CF storage card.

The Sprite Backup, which costs \$20 (around £11, www.spritesoftware.com), is the perfect complement to ActiveSync, as we explained in this

REVIEW GAME

MEAN HAMSTER SOFTWARE Myst

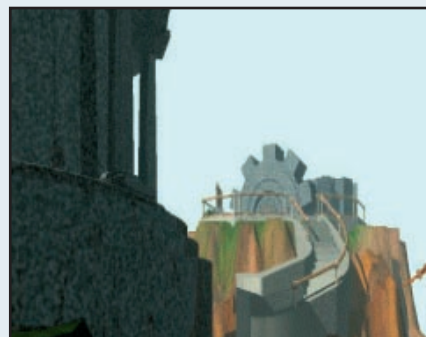
RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$25 (around £14)

DETAILS www.meanhamstersoftware.com

As Pocket PCs become more capable both in processor power and storage capacity, a number of relatively sophisticated PC games are being ported to Windows Mobile devices. The latest example is Mean Hamster Software's version of *Myst*, the groundbreaking graphical adventure game from the mid-1990s. You'll need almost 30MB of storage space for *Myst*, but it's a faithful reproduction of the original, with every scene, sound effect and music clip present and correct.

The object of the game is to explore the virtually deserted mystery island of D'ni, solving puzzles along the way to find your way around and bring the story to its conclusion. There's no combat – just peaceful interaction and lots of head-scratching problems to solve as you navigate through this photo-realistic fantasy world. *Myst*'s heavy emphasis on puzzle solving won't be to everyone's taste, but a little perseverance usually



Explore the beautifully rendered landscapes of D'ni in this faithful reproduction of PC game *Myst*

pays off, enabling you to progress gradually without getting too frustrated.

The 240x320 graphics naturally aren't quite as sharp as those on the PC-based original, but stylus control works better than a mouse when moving around and pointing to objects on the screen, making it better than the PC version in this respect. A Pocket PC version of *Riven*, the first of several sequels to *Myst*, is currently in development.



Excellent, involving graphics and sound



The heavy emphasis on puzzle solving won't be to everyone's taste



column in *Shopper* May 2005. It backs up the entire contents of your internal memory to a storage card. It can do this automatically on a daily basis if you wish. It can then restore absolutely everything in the event of a hard reset, taking your handheld back to the exact state it was in when you last backed up. If you're working on a lot of important documents while away from your desk, there's nothing to stop you running Sprite Backup every few hours for complete peace of mind. It takes only a few minutes, and you can keep as many backup copies as your storage card can accommodate.

For an extra \$10 (around £5) you can buy the Premium edition of Sprite Backup. This adds a Windows-based backup component that works alongside ActiveSync, giving you a second set of PC-based backups for added security. Given ActiveSync's reputation for mangling its own backups occasionally, this is well worth the extra money. Some Pocket PC models come with a similar card backup system built in, so check your user manual for details. Most HPs come with iPAQ Backup, and Fujitsu Siemens devices come with FSC Backup.

Card backups are a great idea, but if your PDA is lost or stolen the card goes with it. If you're on an extended trip and the loss of your PDA data would be catastrophic, consider putting a backup on a spare Secure Digital (SD) or CompactFlash (CF) card and keeping it separate from your Pocket PC. You can buy a 64MB card for around £10, and if your handheld is lost you can buy a replacement unit, plug in the backup card and restore all the data to your new handheld in minutes.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

When your backups are handled safely at your desk and while you're out and about, the next thing to consider is the security of the data on your handheld. What if your Pocket PC were stolen? Are your bank account details and PINs stored in an unprotected Pocket Word file? Does your PDA contain sensitive information that you don't want others to see?

The easiest way to secure everything at a stroke is to use the password protection system built into every Pocket PC. To enable this, tap the Password icon on your Settings screen and check the box next to 'Prompt if device unused for'. The safest option is to set the device to lock itself every time you switch off, in which case set the lock time to zero minutes.

Having to enter a password every time you switch on is tedious, but a number of third-party programs make it easier. Picture Password (\$15, around £8, from www.softava.com) presents you with an onscreen photo of your choice on startup, and you must tap the right spot on the picture to gain access to your device. If you don't get it right first time, you're taken to the standard password entry screen. You can optimise the program for either a stylus or finger tap, and the system works exceptionally well.

Another alternative is 1-Pass (\$15 from www.omegaone.com), which lets you assign a password that you can enter by pressing the four application buttons in the correct sequence. This makes one-handed password input a little easier.

FRESH PRINTS

A few HP iPAQ Pocket PCs have implemented biometric fingerprint scanners over the past few years, enabling you to unlock your handheld by swiping your finger across a tiny scanning window on the front. These were notoriously unreliable until

REVIEW PDA CASE

PIEL FRAMA Cowskin PDA Case

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE €60 (around £41) inc VAT and delivery

DETAILS www.pielframa.com

If your Pocket PC came without a good case, it's worth investing in something to protect it properly. There's a huge selection to choose from, but if you fancy something that's a cut above the average and favour old-fashioned hand-tooled leather, the latest range of Spanish-made Piel Frama cases is sure to please. The supple all-leather cases come in a choice of attractive two-tone colour schemes. Rather than using plastic clips or unsightly Velcro fasteners to hold your PDA in place, Piel Frama cases use leather retainers that slip over the device. It's not quite as quick as clipping it into a plastic bracket, but it looks much more attractive.

Aside from the handmade, hand-stitched finish, there's plenty of attention to detail here, with ABS shock-proof inserts, SD card and business/credit card slots, an extra strong magnetic



catch and a closure strap that's attached to the lid of the case rather than the base, so it won't get in the way of your D-pad navigation control. All the cases come with a removable belt clip, but if that's too geeky for you, it's easy to cover its attachment hole at the back of the case with the little plastic stud supplied. All cases come in a sturdy gift box.

✓ Well designed; supple leather

✗ Expensive



Use Pocket PC's built-in password system to protect your data should it fall into the wrong hands

recently, but the one built into the iPAQ hx2750 works beautifully, making this a good choice for maximum convenience.

If you rely on a global system password to lock intruders out of your Pocket PC, be aware that files stored on a plug-in storage card can still be accessed if the card is plugged into another device. You'll need to password-protect individual documents that contain sensitive data, or store them only in the internal memory. Once open, Pocket Excel files can be password protected using the Password... option on the Edit menu.

If the sensitive data on your handheld is limited to details of your credit cards, PINs and so on, you may not feel the need to lock the entire device. You could just put all your secret details together in a single password-protected Pocket Excel file. A neater way is a password storage program such as the excellent eWallet (\$20, around £11, from www.iliumsoft.com). This stashes away all



Picture Password lets you access your handheld by tapping the correct spot on a picture

your passwords and snippets of private information in a specially encrypted file that locks itself automatically after a few seconds.

DON'T WORRY

Don't let all this talk of security put you off storing sensitive data on your handheld. It may take a little effort to keep your data safe and secure, but there's no way of backing up a paper notebook or Filofax, and you can't stop others accessing its contents if they get hold of it. Your Pocket PC is much safer. **CS**

CONTACT

POCKET PC EXPERT

If there is anything you would like to see covered in *Pocket PC Expert*, please contact us at the address below

pocketpc@computershopper.co.uk